# 166 - A SEARCH FOR AN EAST MILLENARY KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS BEING SPREAD INTO THE WEST- YOGA- A HEALTHY AND WELFARE PRACTICE

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*"Yoga means to tie up, to bring together, to hold, to join together, to link to raise the body intelligence to the level of the mind and then tie them up to join together to the soul."* (IYENGAR, 2007, p. 304)

The idea of studying "yoga" is due to the way traveled during a field research, linked to the Doctorate by one of the PPGCSa in UFRN. During the research, it was observed a lack in an effective practice that would benefit the quality of life of elders housed in the institution.

Even before taking the experience from the yoga practice to those elderly housed in the shelter institution, Vila Vicentina Júlia Freire in Joao Pessoa, subjects of the research, earlier, due to that study, we were invited, after finishing a formation course, run by Associação de Yoga da Paraíba AYPB, by the mayor of Joao Pessoa, capital of Paraiba, to begin a project in favor the city's general community of elderly, interested in the practice and benefits from yoga. Thus, we are developing the theories and techniques learned during our courses and internships, being able to, gradually and truly, notice the physical, mental and spiritual benefits provided to our students, in general.

We are, in this article, only giving a start point to a journey of deep studies, since Yoga, as any other science, requires commitment and determination to the search of constant knowledge. Yoga has been recognized, nowadays, as an important element to the cultural and religious integration between the East and West. Our work here focuses on the history of Yoga in Brazil, reporting consequently the Hinduism introduction. Later, we will consider on our research the integration process, in the specific context of Brazilian society, where the practice becomes widespread in the 1960s. Although Yoga cannot be considered a religion, it is a practice which comes from the Hinduism, carrying in it many references to this Eastern religion.

In Brazil, the word Yoga is found extremely spread. Yoga of the body or Hartha-Yoga took its place in centers, parks, and especially in gyms. Media has been showing its benefits in high-circulation magazines, with many specific publishing about the subject. Stress reduction, loss of weight, relief of hormonal problems (especially during menopause), cure of respiratory diseases and and column problems are some of the goods which have been published by the media, related to Yoga. Thus, the physical benefits of practicing seem to be seducing even more fans in Brazilian society- where the body cult is a central element in contemporary days.

The increase of Yoga practice, while physical practice, does not exclude its growth while a spiritual path. Actually, both elements are linked and, many times, when the person goes to a physical practice, the participant ends up getting to know a little of the tradition in which he/she is wrapped, becoming interested and adopting religious habits from the Hindu religion.

Through this way which starts in the body, the yoga is becoming an important element to the connection between Western and Eastern cultures, because, in order to practice Yoga the individuals needn't abandon their original religion- no matter whether they were Catholics or Protestants or any other. In addition, Yoga has become a form of spiritual practice to many people who are far from religion in their daily lives- so characteristic phenomenon of contemporary societies.

Historian Geog Feuerstein, a pioneer in research of yoga, in the field of historiography, emphasizes that both postures of yoga, which call West public attention, are just the "skin" of this practice. Behind them is hiding the "flesh and blood" of the control of breathing and the hardest mental techniques to learn, besides moral practices that require a lifetime steadfast and correspond to the "skeleton" of the body. The superior practices of concentration (Dharana), meditation (Dhiana) and ecstasy (Samadhi) would, in turn, be similar to the circulatory and nervous systems. And at the heart of yoga, according to Feuerstein, is the realization of the "Transcendent Reality", whatever that designs. (FEUERSTEIN, 2005, p. 19)

This process of realization of their "Reality Will - which is the supreme goal of Yoga - is reflected, in real life, in a process of searching for the participant's own transcendence of the ego, which, according to the philosophical principles of yoga, is one of the aspects of consciousness that makes us always individual subjects separated from the world where we are immersed (Yeng, 2007 p. 219).

The Vedas - first nations that there were news in the history of mankind, to organize a set of practices and rituals with the aim of establishing direct contact with the Divine - would be people who have lived in India (Valley of the Indo-Sarasvati), a period between 4000 and 5000 ac . The Vedic practices involve sacrifices initially, but the sacrifices are changed at the stage of the Upanishads - the wise védicos. (Ions, 1987, p.37)

According to the principles of Yoga Pre-classic, by the concentration of attention, you can break the walls between the visible and invisible, reaching the contact with the divine spheres. That is why, in its original form, the yoga would consist, essentially, on techniques of mental concentration, control of breathing, singing and worship of spiritual gods to Vedic.

George Feuerstein also defines, Yoga, in his text, as one of the three major branches of Hindu spirituality, next to the Samkhia (philosophy of creating the cosmos) and Vedanta (philosophy based on the final part of VEDAS, which is, in Upanishads). In other words, it is about a discipline viscerally linked to the Hindu religion in its moment of origin. This condition remains until the present time, between different Yoga schools in the Eastern and Western.

This affiliation to Hinduism focuses directly on the concept of "divine" that works in different yoga schools. While the vision of the world Vedic texts, which flow the Hindu religion, is essentially political - with a broad and complex pantheon of gods - the belief in a God is also included in this tradition. Even the gods members of Trinity's main Hinduism - Braman (God of creation), Vishnu (God's residence) and Shiva (God of destruction) are considered emanations of a single principle creator, emanations which, in turn, sets out very principles of the creation of all things. (See ions, 1987, p.40). Well, in a mystical connotation, taking out the Sevanda which introduced the Yoga here, the first to do so, as a work of academy of Yoga, was Caio Miranda, which was also the first Brazilian author on the subject, editing, from there, other books and a founding twenty institutes of Yoga in various cities of Brazil. In 1962 - a lieutenant of the army who comes to be known as Master Hermógenes, founded in Rio de Janeiro the Academia Hermógenes de Yoga (Hermogenes Academy of Yoga). In addition to teaching, Hermógenes becomes one of the best-known Brazilian authors on yoga books. His publications Autoperfection with Hatha Yoga and Yoga to Nervous become classics at the end of the 60s, when the Yoga achieves a major impact, especially among fans of "alternative life". In 1964, comes

into play another central character of the movement of Yoga in Brazil: the teacher De Rose, who founded at the age of 20, the Brazilian Institute of Yoga, also in Rio de Janeiro. In 1969, De Rose publishes the first edition of what would be considered his most important book, Handbook of Old Yoga. Both Hermógenes and De Rose, were disciples of Caio Miranda, following later their own paths and seeking help from different masters in Indian. Despite the common origin, De Rose and Hermógenes followed by separate paths within the Brazilian Yoga, creating a kind of split within the movement. De Rose, in1978, led the campaign for the creation and the first disclosure of a bill aimed at regulating the profession of teacher of yoga. There were, under his influence, several University Extended courses for training Yoga instructors, in many universities, throughout the country. In 1981, Svami Sarvananda, Caio Miranda and other big Yoga names in Brazil would have founded the 1st Regular Training Course in yoga, at the current Integrated Spiritist Colleges at the time called the College of Bio-Psychic Science of Parana. So, spread Yoga Federations and associations throughout the country, with training courses and opening of academies in the 1980s and 1990s. Understanding that extent are yoga taking as part of Brazilian society, this process of guiding the Western religious experience, is one of the keys points we want to embrace. To that end, we must resort to Yoga books that are being published in Brazil, making a comparison between different works and various historical moments. Develop a mapping of forms such as Yoga has been presented in Brazil, to understand the ways like this Work is being done in gyms and released in the media, is one of our interests. Methodologically, at the search for more consistent information, we are using, concomitantly, reading and analysis of Brazilian publications; research in “sebos” and public and private libraries; survey of historical data in books, newspapers, magazines and internet, as well as interviews with old and renowned teachers, which feature in Pernambuco and Paraiba, teachers like Cristina Abreu Horivaldo Gomes; in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Master Hermógenes and the teacher De Rose. We are also going to investigate young academies teachers, with current practices of Yoga, as much as other teachers and students like senior citizens, walking, gradually, the initiation, development and results provided by practice of students, especially those of age advanced.

Then, we can see a record of one of our practical activities in the Fellowship of the Elderly in promotion of a project embraced by the mayor of João Pessoa - PB:



**Final Considerations**

There is a lack of academic research on YOGA within the historiography and science of religion, although researchers in the areas of health and physical education are already developing academic research on the theme. Several Brazilian publications on the subject, almost always, were written by reachers themselves or masters of Yoga, where the major concern of authors is to define the Yoga for the brazilian public, without, however, going any further in the analysis of yoga history, particularly in Brazil. Aimed at outlining, based on all material understood, since all available literature acquired by the interviews and practical knowledge, a history of Yoga in Brazil by the perspective of historiography and science of religion, but also publish the results of experiences together, personally, by the authors. But after all, how can we define the yoga and what its relationship with Hinduism? As this word, which comes in India about 5000 years, as a name to spiritual discipline, becomes, in Brazil, in synonymous of good shape and health? To what extent this deep spiritual meaning has been preserved in Brazilian contemporary society? What are the main historical agents - teachers, masters, yogues - that work on this case and what its forms of action? How does the interface between the practice of yoga and Brazilian society goes, because of its peculiarities religious and cultural? These are the crucial questions of the research we have done. We don't want to obtain unambiguous answers to these questions, but we want that such questioning serve as a north for an investigation in the midst of a historic framework of ancient texts and related knowledge to the subject. The main factors that lead the West to beat at the doors of Yoga has been the experience of physical health and welfare provided by the practice of "Asano" (the postures of yoga) and "Pranaiamas" (breathing exercises). But how does these physical postures that draw the attention of the western public are related with the spiritual nature of yoga? The answer to this question will be given based on studies in development. But now, we can say that before all the theoretical, so far, studies conclude that all good definitions on the subject discussed pass through a concept praised: the unity and discipline spiritual words are keys to understanding the term Yoga, linking thus "body and mind."

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**A SEARCH FOR AN EAST MILLENARY KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS BEING SPREAD INTO THE WEST- YOGA- A HEALTHY AND WELFARE PRACTICE**

**Abstract**

As seen in the numerous interrogations about this millenary practice Yoga - here begins a search about this subject, relatively complex. The idea of building a work about “yoga” is due to the way traveled during a field research, linked to the Doctorate by one of the PPGCSa in UFRN. During the research, it was observed a lack in an effective practice that would benefit the quality of life of elders housed there. In this article, in particular, the study focuses on the history of yoga, in Brazil, reporting consequently the introduction of Hinduism, which comes from the East. Therefore, we are, only, beginning the long journey is this search for knowledge, using studies that will get deeper, since Yoga, as any other science, requires commitment and determination to the search of constant knowledge. Yoga has been recognized, nowadays, as an important element of cultural and religious integration between East and West. Although Yoga cannot be considered a religion, it is a practice which comes from the Hinduism, carrying in it many references to this Eastern religion. Some of these have been dismantled in the West, especially with the spread of exercises in gyms - where the focus becomes the physical and aesthetic benefits deriving from them. But if some elements are omitted, others are still present - as the mantras, the greetings and the names of postures that tribute Hindu gods - especially in specialized centers. It is important, weaving in the search, to distinguish which elements of the religion are being kept and what elements have been modified in the Brazilian context. And, besides, to draw a path traveled by this Eastern practice to reach its current level of broadcasting in our society.

Key words: culture, yoga, exercises

**LA QUÊTE D'UN SAVOIR ORIENTAL MILLÉNAIRE QUI SE PROPAGE EN OCCIDENT YOGA UNE PRATIQUE DE SANTÉ ET DE BIN-ÊTRE**

**Résumé**

Étant donné les innombrables interrogations sur cette pratique millénaire YOGA nous entamons ici une recherche de connaissance sur ce sujet, relativement complexe. L'idée de bâtir un travail de yoga nous la devons au chemin parcouru lors d'une recherche de terrain, dans un Asile pour personnes âgées, recherche liée à la préparation au doctorat de l'une des auteurs dans le cadre du PPGCSa de l'UFRN. Au cours de la recherche, nous avons observé le manque d'une pratique effective qui puisse améliorer la qualité de vie des personnes âgées, hôtes de ce lieu. Dans cet article, en particulier, nous centrons notre étude sur l'histoire du Yoga au Brésil, tout en relatant, par voie de conséquence, l'introduction de l'Hindouisme, originaire de l'orient. Nous n'en sommes donc qu'au début d'un long chemin de quête du savoir, à travers des études qui devront être approfondies puisque le yoga, comme toute science, requiert engagement et détermination dans la recherche de connaissances constantes. Le Yoga est reconnu, dans l'actualité, comme élément important d'intégration culturelle et religieuse entre l'occident et l'orient. Bien que le yoga ne puisse être considéré comme une religion, il s'agit d'une pratique qui naît dans le contexte de l'Hindouisme et qui porte en lui d'innombrables références à cette religion orientale . Certaines d'entre elles sont supprimées en occident, spécialement avec la diffusion d'exercices dans les salles de gymnastique où le point central réside dans les bienfaits physiques et esthétiques qui en découlent. Mais, si quelques éléments sont omis, d'autres sont encore présents comme les mantras, les salutations et les noms eux-mêmes des postures qui rendent hommage à des divinités hindoues - , surtout dans des centres spécialisés. Il est important, dans la mise en oeuvre de la recherche, de distinguer quels sont les éléments de cette matrice religieuse qui sont maintenus et quels sont ceux qui sont modifiés dans le contexte brésilien. En outre, il est important également de tracer une trajectoire parcourue par cette pratique orientale pour atteindre son niveau actuel de diffusion au sein de notre société.

Mots-clés : culture, yoga, exercices.

**LA BÚSQUEDA DE UN SABER ORIENTAL MILENAR QUE SE PROPAGA EN EL OCCIDENTE - YOGA - UNA PRÁCTICA DE SALUD Y BIENESTAR**

**Resumen**

Haya vista las innúmeras interrogaciones sobre esta práctica milenaria YOGA - , iniciamos aquí una búsqueda de conocimiento por este asunto, relativamente complejo. La idea de construir un trabajo de Yoga se debe al camino recorrido durante una investigación de campo, en una Institución Asilar, vinculada al doctorado de una de las autoras por el PPGCSA de la UFRN. A lo largo de la investigación, se observó la carencia de una práctica efectiva que viera a favorecer la cualidad de vida de las personas mayores albergadas de allí. En este artículo, en particular, enfocamos El estudio de la historia de la Yoga, en el Brasil, relatando consecuentemente a la introducción del Hinduismo, oriunda del oriente. Por tanto, solo estamos dando inicio a un largo camino en la búsqueda del saber, por medios de estudios que deberán ser profundizados, ya que o Yoga, como toda ciencia, requiere empeño y determinación en la búsqueda por conocimientos constantes. La Yoga viene siendo reconocida, en la actualidad, como importante elemento de integración cultural y religiosa entre el occidente y el oriente. Aunque la Yoga no pueda ser considerada una religión, se trata de una práctica que nace en el contexto del hinduismo y que carga consigo innúmeras referencias a esta religión oriental. Algunas de éstas vienen siendo suprimidas en el occidente, especialmente con la difusión de ejercicios en academias de gimnasia - donde el foco pasa a ser los beneficios físicos y estéticos resultantes de ella. \sin embargo, si algunos elementos son omitidos, otros continúan presentes - como los *mantras*, las saludos y los propios nombres de posturas que homenajean divinidades hindúes -, sobre todo en centros especializados. Es importante, a lo largo de la investigación, distinguir cuales elementos, de esa matriz religiosa, están siendo mantenidos y cuales elementos están siendo modificados en el contexto brasileño. Además de ello, trazar un trayecto recorrido por esa práctica oriental para alcanzar su actual nivel de difusión dentro de nuestra sociedad.

Palabras llaves: cultura , yoga, ejercicios.

**A BUSCA POR UM SABER ORIENTAL MILENAR QUE SE PROPAGA NO OCIDENTE - YOGA - UMA PRÁTICA DE SAÚDE E BEM-ESTAR**

**Resumo**

Hajam vista as inúmeras interrogações sobre esta prática milenar YOGA - , iniciamos aqui uma busca de conhecimento por este assunto, relativamente complexo. A idéia de construirmos um trabalho de Yoga deve-se ao caminho percorrido durante uma pesquisa de campo, em uma Instituição Asilar, vinculada ao doutoramento de uma das autoras pelo PPGCSa da UFRN. No decorrer da pesquisa, observou-se a carência de uma prática efetiva que viesse a favorecer à qualidade de vida dos idosos albergados dali. Neste artigo, em particular, focamos o estudo da história do Yoga, no Brasil, relatando conseqüentemente a introdução do Hinduísmo, oriunda do oriente. Portanto, estamos, apenas, dando início a um longo caminho na procura do saber, por meios de estudos que deverão ser aprofundados, já que o Yoga, como toda ciência, requer empenho e determinação na busca por conhecimentos constantes. O Yoga vem sendo reconhecido, na atualidade, como importante elemento de integração cultural e religiosa entre o ocidente e o oriente. Embora o Yoga não possa ser considerado uma religião, trata-se de uma prática que nasce no contexto do hinduísmo e que carrega consigo inúmeras referências a esta religião oriental. Algumas destas vêm sendo suprimidas no ocidente, especialmente com a difusão de exercícios em academias de ginástica - onde o foco passa a ser os benefícios físicos e estéticos dela decorrentes. Mas, se alguns elementos são omitidos, outros continuam presentes - como os mantras, as saudações e os próprios nomes de posturas que homenageiam divindades hindus -, sobretudo em centros especializados. É importante, no tecer da pesquisa, distinguir quais elementos, dessa matriz religiosa, vêm sendo mantidos e quais elementos vêm sendo modificados no contexto brasileiro. E, além disso, traçar uma trajetória percorrida por esta prática oriental para alcançar seu atual nível de difusão dentro da nossa sociedade.

Palavras Chaves: cultura , yoga, exercícios.